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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 002880

SIPDIS

FOR S/WCI AMB PIERRE PROSPER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/03/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KAWC](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: YEMENIS REMAIN RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT GTMO DETAINEES

REF: PROSPER-KRAJESKI E-MAILS OF 9/27 AND 9/28/2005

Classified By: AMBASSADOR THOMAS KRAJESKI, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: President Saleh and his Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Interior have made clear in recent meetings that the ROYG will not accept repatriation of detainees from Guantanamo Bay who are designated as "enemy combatants." Yemeni officials have stated that the ROYG has enough problems dealing with the terrorists who are already in Yemen. These officials do not readily believe USG assurances that we will not criticize the ROYG if it decides to release the returnees, or that we will not ask that they be detained indefinitely. It may be necessary to contemplate third-country resettlement of Yemeni detainees. Post welcomes further thoughts on the issue, and will support the visit of a high-level delegation to talk with President Saleh, but it appears that his mind is made up on this matter. END SUMMARY

2. (C) During a discussion with Homeland Security Advisor Fran Townsend in early September, President Saleh said that the ROYG "did not want" repatriations of Yemeni detainees at Guantanamo Bay who are designated as enemy combatants because Yemen was "full up with terrorists now." In subsequent meetings with FonMin al-Qirbi and MinInt al-Alimi, Ambassador discussed the inappropriateness and unacceptability of that response, stressing that the USG required an immediate written response from the ROYG about whether or not it would accept Guantanamo Bay detainees. Thus far, post has not received a response from either ministry. (NOTE: Yemen accepted one detainee in August who was designated as a "no-longer enemy combatant" and may be willing to accept further such detainees, but there have been no clear indications from the ROYG to that end. END NOTE)

3. (C) In addition to Saleh's concern about bringing terrorists back to Yemen, al-Qirbi and al-Alimi added that they did not fully trust the USG's assurances that we would not demand that the ROYG indefinitely detain returnees from Guantanamo. They were equally apprehensive about dealing with possible criticism from the USG if they released the detainees, and international criticism if they kept them in detention without trial.

4. (C) COMMENT: It is not clear to us at this point how to change Saleh's mind on this issue. Post is not optimistic that a high-level USG delegation would allay the Yemenis' concerns and convince them to accept repatriation of their own countrymen. At this point, it may be worthwhile to contemplate third-country resettlement options in the event that we are unable to move President Saleh off of his position. END COMMENT
Krajeski